



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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TTAP AND STAR CENTER ACCESS EXPRESS BUS STEER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TOWARD BENEFICIAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

*Tennessee Department of Human Services and Jackson STAR Center work together to
provide mobile assistive technology in western rural communities*

NASHVILLE, TN. – The Department of Human Services (DHS) state office recently welcomed the STAR Center Access Express bus. It is tasked with providing technology assessment and assistance to people with disabilities. The Star Center staff provided demonstrations of the type of technology available to people with disabilities that can assist them with daily functions that are often taken for granted such as watching television, using a computer or having a conversation. The Access Express bus is a mobile function of the Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP), a statewide program provided by the DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services.

The fully wheelchair accessible STAR Center Access Express is based on a 42-foot Blue Bird bus that houses multiple on-board computer workstations and enough space to conduct most of the same demonstration and evaluation services found at the STAR Center's Jackson facility including: Computer Access Evaluations, Assistive Technology (AT) Evaluations, Augmentative and Alternative Communication Evaluations, Workplace and Home Accommodation Evaluations and Community Outreach.

In order to maximize the number of individuals and families served, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), TTAP and other community partners collaborated with the STAR Center in Jackson to fund and build the mobile technology center evaluation and demonstration lab. The bus is designed to bring many of the services offered through the VR and TTAP programs at the STAR Center to more rural communities. Doing so increases access to residents who might not otherwise have an opportunity to utilize the same benefits of more urban based communities. Currently the Access Express travels to 21 counties in West Tennessee.

“Due to their disability, often the individuals we serve experience lack of transportation and other barriers that make coming to us for services more difficult,” said Kevin Wright, Executive Director of the TTAP program. “The Access Express allows us to lessen those barriers by bringing services to the communities where clients and their families live.”

TTAP has focused on activities that allow individuals with disabilities, state government agencies and the business community to find solutions to the challenges that many individuals with disabilities face when getting an education, finding a job or simply being a part of their community.

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The STAR Center Access Express bus also serves as an education and public awareness tool to introduce individuals with disabilities and their families, educators, employers, businesses, local and state government agencies and other community organizations to assistive technology and the ways technology can help them all.

The Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP) is a federally funded statewide program in the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, designed to increase access to, and acquisition of, assistive technology devices and services. Through its four core programs: Funding Assistance, Device Demonstration, Device Loan and Device Reutilization, TTAP and a network of five assistive technology centers help people with disabilities and their families find and get the tools that they need to live independent, productive lives where and how they choose. Learn more at <http://www.tn.gov/humanserv/rehab/ttap.html>.

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